

Browsing Yourself to Apathy

The older I get, the more I find that much of Christian living comes down to subtle and seemingly benign choices. One of these choices I have been thinking about is the moments of browsing on a smartphone. Since I got a smartphone, I would not classify myself as being addicted to it nor do I spend large amounts of time on it. However, one habit I developed was to **browse the news, or Facebook, or YouTube during most of the empty moments of life** where I did not have other responsibilities or interactions present. As I did this over time, I started to notice my growing craving to be entertained with something new and exciting in all unoccupied moments. **The subconscious belief that every swipe gave the potential for new information was addicting and I had trained myself to expect it more and more.**

Pondering this brought me to think about Acts 17:21: *Now all the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there would **spend their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new.*** There we see people craving new information. This was me. And while the things I was craving were not inherently wrong, I was becoming more and more dependent on the newness of information for practical satisfaction in life.

Contrast this with Psalms 40:1-5: *I waited patiently for the Lord; he inclined to me and heard my cry. He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. He put a **new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God.** Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the Lord. Blessed is the man who makes the Lord his trust, who does not turn to the proud, to those who go astray after a lie! You have multiplied, O Lord my God, **your wondrous deeds and your thoughts toward us;** none can compare with you! **I will proclaim and tell of them,** yet they are more than can be told.* Here we see the psalmist talking about a different kind of newness. He is pondering the ever present working of God in his life and then praising him with new songs about His wonderful deeds.

The primary problem for me was that by filling all the empty moments of life with browsing for new information, **I was becoming apathetic and missing the work God was doing in and around me.** So, a practical action I took was to limit the number of times I could freely browse a smartphone per day. This was to help avoid craving new information and to free up my mind to meditate more on Christ. But ultimately, the question comes down to the primary source of new joy in our lives. Is it from the finished work of Christ being applied in our lives or is it in new information that entertains and excites? Christ has done a new work in your heart through salvation and the Spirit is doing new work in your life through sanctification every day. So, **my encouragement for myself and us all is to put down our phones long enough to notice what He is doing and praise Him for it because He is worthy.**

Jacob